

X

Comfort *and* Counsel *under the*
sickness *or* death of pious friends.

A
S E R M O N
On Occasion of the Much Lamented
D E A T H
O F

Mrs. DELICIA IREMONGER,

Late Wife of

Joshua Iremonger, Esq;

PREACHED IN
WESTMINSTER,

December 16. 1744.

To which is added,

A Brief ACCOUNT of her LIFE
and CHARACTER.

By © *HUGHES, D. D.*

‘ If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because—I go
unto the Father.’ *John xiv. 28.*

‘ Adieu, my Child, now I must follow you.’ *Pomf.*

L O N D O N:

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325 X

W. Musgrave!



T O

Mrs. *H U G H E S.*

M A D A M,

TH E near relation, into which, by the providence of God and your favour, I have had the honour and happiness to be admitted, may be thought a sufficient objection against an address of this kind in *a day*; when it is become the
a 2 fashion

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fashion not to appear to own *any* relation, and the *nearest* relatives converse in the manner of strangers. I shall not wonder, if I incur the charge of being very unpolished; nor will it give me the least concern: for, besides that I have no great opinion of modern fashions; it happens, that I have one of the most polite writers of this last age for a precedent.^a

GREAT obligations demand thankful *acknowledgments*, and the best *returns* of gratitude: it is the daily study of my life to perform the *latter*; and it is the design of this Dedication to tender the *former*. I have the deepest sense of your inestimable favour, in giving me yourself; and, when I look back upon the many proofs you have given me of a generous and sincere affection for near seventeen

^a Mr. Steele, afterwards Sir Richard, dedicated the third volume of the *Lady's Library* to his wife, A. D. MDCCXIV.

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venteen years past, I feel a pleasure which is not to be expressed.

~~Y~~ I AM heartily sorry for the sad occasion of the present address to you: but yet I hope, the following discourse may, instead of renewing your grief, help to alleviate the distressing sorrows, which the death of a dear niece, *almost your own child*, has caused.

NONE but GOD, and each of us know, what *sincere mourners* we are, and how sensibly we *feel* this stroke of providence. We did hope, that the dear creature deceased would have been continued a blessing to the world, for many years after we had finished the journey of life: but GOD has seen fit to determine the matter otherwise; — and now we must follow her: — GOD grant us a joyful meeting with *her*, and *our other christian friends* in the heavenly world! there our happiness will be complete, and
we

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we shall never be separated again!

It is a great mercy, that her life was not *sooner* cut off: many threatening illnesses was she carried through, by God's blessing upon your watchful care. I know it affords you unspeakable pleasure to think of all the kind offices you did her; whereby her life was rendered comfortable to *herself*, and she was qualified for great usefulness to *others*.

You had the satisfaction to see all your endeavours for her advantage, crowned with remarkable success! — and you have given a full demonstration, that it is not necessary to introduce young persons into *much company*, or to acquaint them with the *diversions* and *amusements* of life, under the notion of *seeing the world*; in order to their being able to bear an agreeable part in *conversation*, and to behave in a *decorous* manner, when

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when they are grown up in life.— This is a dangerous rock on which multitudes split ; and the *very reason*, why so many, when they come into the world, are absolutely *unfit* for the *duties* of life, and know not how to be *useful* and serviceable in their *proper stations*. — This is a *solecism in education*, for which thousands will have cause to curse their *parents*, or *tutors* to all eternity !

You all along took care, that this dear child should have every agreeable amusement, that was *innocent*, and what her *delicate constitution* would bear : but you wisely judged, that *reason* should be got to some degree of maturity, and principles of *religion* should have taken possession of the heart ; before *young* persons are turned loose into the world, or made acquainted with those *gaeties* of life, which are apt to suppress and stifle the dictates of *both*.

You

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You have had the pleasure besides, to see this young lady *disposed of* in life, altogether agreeably to your warmest wishes ; to a young gentleman possessed of the most excellent accomplishments ; who has endeared himself for ever to *us*, by the most tender and affectionate behaviour towards *one*, whom we so dearly loved ; and had engaged *her* affections to so high a degree, that she thought herself the most happy woman in the world. — And indeed, such strength of affection, such mutual esteem, such an entire suitableness of temper, such an exact likeness and sympathy between these two kindred souls, could not fail of producing an uncommon degree of felicity ;

“ Two happy souls made intimately one. ”

IN this new situation of life, when your dear niece was shown
to

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to the world, she conciliated the esteem of all she conversed with; her conduct met with universal applause; and she became valued and beloved by her new relatives, as one of their own family: nor is there the least reason to doubt, but she would have shone with an increasing lustre in every condition of life. — But —

THE world was not worthy of her: she was *early* ripe for heaven: and GOD loved her *too well*, to prolong her continuance in this vale of tears; where evils and sorrows are mingled with the most prosperous circumstances. She is taken away from all the troubles of life: and who knows what evils are coming? She is now out of the reach of danger, and advanced to a state of the highest dignity, and consummate bliss.

LET us, dear MADAM, dry up our tears: and though we cannot

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but

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but tenderly resent *our* unspeakable *loss*; yet the consideration of *her* inconceivable *gain* should support our spirits.

IT may be some alleviation of sorrow, that though *she* is taken from us, she has left behind a most delightful *babe*; who, after her example, may be affording it's relatives daily pleasure, while it is partaking of their constant care and kindness^b. — You will, I am sure, heartily concur with me in praying for the continued life of this dear little boy: that he may stand up in his mother's place; to witness for GOD, to be an ornament to religion, a comfort to his friends, and a blessing to the world: and to this purpose we need only wish, that he may inherit the spirit, the virtue and piety of his parents; *one* now in heaven, *the other*

^b Non totus recessit, reliquit nobis liberos, in quibus eum debemus agnoscere, & in quibus eum cernimus & tenemus. *Ambros. de Imperatore Theodosio.*

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other in the road to it. May divine grace conduct him safe thither, after a *long life* of usefulness and comfort here on earth!

I REJOICE, and adore the mercy of GOD, which has wonderfully supported you in this day of sorrow. You have evidently discovered the power of divine grace in your soul, and have acted throughout this whole melancholy scene like a sincere christian, entirely resigned to GOD. May *patience* have her *perfect work*! may your soul be enriched more and more with the graces and comforts of the Holy Spirit, and your prospects of heaven grow brighter daily! till at length, at the call of GOD, you shall ascend on high to meet your deceased *niece* and other pious *friends* in paradise: they expect you there, and will welcome your arrival with the greatest satisfaction.

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THE prolonging your valuable life in circumstances of ease and comfort, and in a continued capacity of usefulness, is the highest *temporal* blessing I have to ask of GOD: this is a subject of my daily *prayers*; and it shall be the diligent, pleasing care of my life, to *contribute* all I can towards *both*.

I am, M A D A M,

your most affectionate Husband,

and most obedient

bumble Servant,

Aldermanbury, Jan.

22. 1744-5.

Obadiah Hughes.

2 S A M. XII. 22, 23.

And he said, while the child was yet alive, I fasted and wept; for I said, who can tell, whether God will be gracious to me, that the child may live? But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.

I MAY this day adopt the words of *Job*, and say unto you in his mournful language; *have pity upon me, have pity upon me, O ye my friends, for the hand of GOD hath touched me: ^a I am the man that have seen affliction by the rod of his wrath ^b: a most desirable and delightful relative he has removed into silence; dear, I imagine, as an own child; one, whom I loved as*

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my

^a Job xix. 21.^b Lam. iii. 1.

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my own soul! a dreadful wound is given to me; I feel the smarting anguish, and I cannot but mourn. Tears and sorrow upon such afflictive occasions are both *natural*, and *allowable*: the grand concern of a christian is to moderate his sorrows, and keep his passions under the restraints of *reason* and *religion*; that they may not be exorbitant, or betray him into any indecencies of conduct, to the dishonour of God, and the discredit of his profession.

It is highly proper therefore at such melancholy seasons, to meditate upon those considerations, which have the most likely tendency to blunt the edge of the affliction, and to reconcile us to the awful providence. Our pious friends departed do not need our tears; but we need all the comforts we can get, to support us under the loss of them: and, blessed be God, there is a large variety of arguments, to relieve our mourning spirits, to be found in the sacred writings; which contain a rich treasure of divine consolations, adapted to the several kinds of sorrow, to which we are liable in the present imperfect state.

THE

sickness or death of pious friends. 3

THE words I have now read are full of comfort and counsel, in two very afflictive scenes of sorrow, viz. the *sickness* or *expected death* of our dear friends; and their *actual remove* from us. And we may learn from pious *David's* example, how to behave in both those seasons of distress. For though the *direct* view of this passage is to children, and the conduct of parents; yet there is nothing so *particular* herein, but what will allow a more extensive consideration of the words, as referring to the sickness and death of our christian friends, and pious relatives in *general*.

It will not be amiss to give a brief abstract of the history, to which these words belong.

KING *David*, who, in the general conduct of his life, was *a man after God's own heart*^a; to whom God himself bore this testimony, *my servant David kept my commandments, and followed me with all his heart, to do that only which was right in mine eyes*^b; yet even he *had* a notorious fall into complicated and horrible sin.—
Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed

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lest

^a 1 Sam. xiii. 14. Acts xiii. 22. ^b 1 Kings xiv. 8.

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lest he fall! ^c — There was a very dark spot in his character, and aggravated guilt had he contracted: one false step led to another, and the unhappy frail prince was at once betrayed into *adultery* and *murder*. What a fine character was his! he *did* that which was *right in the eyes of the Lord*, and turned not aside from any thing, that he commanded him all the days of his life; what a pity there should be an exception here! but yet so there was, and a most shameful one too; it follows, *save only in the matter of Uriah the Hittite* ^d. This is the unhappy fact, that lays the foundation of the whole story, to which the text relates.

DAVID had committed adultery with *Bathsheba* the wife of *Uriah*, when her husband was in the army, as far off as the country of the *Ammonites*, and was not expected back till the end of the campaign. *Bathsheba* proved with child. If this should be discovered to have been in the absence of her husband, and that the King was the man who had offered the injury; it would turn to his shame, and might possibly (as in some cases) hazard his crown.

David

^c 1 Cor. x. 12.

^d 1 Kings xv. 5.

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David hereupon sends to *Joab*, the general of his forces, to transmit him an account of the state of the army, by the hands of *Uriah* : the King's command is observed ; but *Uriah*, defeating his design, is directly remanded to the army ; and *David* sends a letter by him to *Joab*, with orders, that *Uriah* should be stationed in some hot place of action, and be there abandoned to the enemy, that he *might be smitten and die* in battle. The cruel order is executed, the wicked project succeeded, and *Uriah* is murdered. *Joab* sends the account by express to *David* ; he receives the news with secret satisfaction : though the king's forces had sustained a very great loss ; yet all was well, since *Uriah* was out of the way : *Bathsheba* mourns for her husband a while ; and as soon as the days of mourning were over, *David* sends for her to his palace, and makes her his wife.

THE revenge of *Uriah*, and the damage the king might have sustained thereby, was prevented by *Uriah's* death ; but the crime could not be concealed, by reason of the birth of the child so soon after marriage.

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riage.—N. Those who will be guilty of sin, must expect to meet with shame; they may *be sure* their *sin* will find them out.^a — But this was not the worst part of the case; no: *the thing, that David had done, displeased the Lord*^b. GOD saw these sins in *David* his servant: he charges the guilt of them upon him, and is extremely offended with him: *Nathan* the prophet is sent by GOD, to bring *David* to a sense of his complicated crimes; and to acquaint him, in what way he must expect to feel the divine resentment.

DAVID becomes a true penitent; the LIst psalm, which he penned on this occasion, represents him *as such* in a very affecting light: *Nathan*, finding him in this humble frame, assures him, in the name of GOD, that the LORD had so far put away his *sin*, as that he should not himself die for it: *howbeit, because, by this deed, great occasion was given to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, and much dishonour was done to religion, the child that is born unto thee shall surely die*^c. The message

^a Numb. xxxii. 23.

^b 2 Sam. xi. 27.

^c 2 Sam. xii. 13, 14.

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sage being delivered, *Nathan* immediately withdraws from court, and leaves the king to his own reflections. The new-born babe is seized with sickness; *David* humbles himself under the mighty hand of God, is greatly affected with this token of God's displeasure, and earnestly begs the child's life. His prayer is rejected, and *the child died on the seventh day, i. e.* when it was seven days old. The king having discovered so much concern during the child's illness, his courtiers were afraid to acquaint him of its death; and concealed it as long as they could; till at length they were obliged, in answer to his explicit question, to say, *he is dead.*

DAVID receives the notice with a most amazing calmness and composure of spirit: he immediately forbears any further expressions of sorrow, applies himself to religious exercises, goes *into the house of the Lord*; no doubt, to acknowledge the hand of God in his affliction, to humble himself for his sins, to ask God's pardon, and implore grace and support under his present trial.—N. Religious exercises give the best relief

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relief to a good man, when *his heart is overwhelmed* with sorrow : he goes to the rock that is *higher than himself*^a ; there he finds a sure refuge and shelter from all storms and dangers.

DAVID next returns to his own house, appears eased of his burden, eats and drinks, and refreshes himself, to the great surprize of all his servants : who take the liberty to ask their royal master, the reasons of this different behaviour. He gives his answer in the words of the text, which contain a plain account of his conduct, *viz.* “ That
 “ while the child was living, he thought
 “ himself bound earnestly to importune
 “ GOD’s favour towards it ; for though
 “ *Nathan* had said, the child shall surely
 “ die ; yet, for ought *David* knew, the
 “ threatening might be conditional, and
 “ that, upon his humble penitent appli-
 “ cation to GOD, he might obtain the
 “ reversing of the sentence ; *who can tell,*
 “ whether GOD *will be gracious to me,*
 “ *that the child may live?* — But now
 “ the child was actually dead, and there
 “ was no further room for prayer in it’s
 “ be-

^a Ps. lxi. 2.

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“ behalf, he thought it his duty to be satisfied with the divine disposal, and to acquiesce in the will of God ; and he suggests several serious thoughts, which helped him thus to compose his spirits.”

THIS is the short view of the whole story: the words of the text conclude it; and we may learn from *David's* example, how to behave, both when our dear relatives and friends are *sick*, and when any of them *dies*. For though, as I hinted before, the *direct* view of this passage is to children, and the conduct of parents; yet it may be extended to the sickness and death of our pious friends in *general*.

§ I. LET us view *David's* conduct during the sickness of the child; he *besought God for the child, and fasted, and lay all night upon the earth, and wept.*

IN *David's* case, now before us, there was indeed something singular: the child was begotten in adultery; and a great part of *David's* concern must be supposed to turn upon his own sin, which he could

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plainly

plainly read in his punishment : the sickness and death of this child was denounced, as a sure token of God's displeasure against *David* ; which the penitent king does now most tenderly relent. The thoughts of this drew from him floods of tears, and put him upon all the forms of grief that he could use, made him lie prostrate upon the ground, fasting and praying, under the mighty hand of God lifted up against him, that God would turn from his anger, and spare the child, which would be a pleasing token of God's being reconciled to him. *David's* expressions of grief proceeded not altogether from a *natural*, but also from a *spiritual* and *religious* principle ; his tears were penitential ; they shewed the fervour of his soul in prayer ; how much affected he was with the apprehension of God's displeasure ; and also, how earnestly desirous he was, that the poor innocent child might not die for his sin.

THESE were the things, which perhaps principally made *David* thus *fast* and *weep* and *pray* before God : but though there was some-

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something *particular* in this case; yet his behaviour *in the main* is to be imitated.

ARE any of your children, any of your dear relatives, sick near unto death? Enquire wherefore God does thus contend with you. See, whether this is not by way of punishment for your faults, that God corrects you in your children, or friends: —perhaps you are too fond of your children, and so in danger of spoiling them; in this case, they are too great a charge to be intrusted with you: —perhaps you are too negligent of them; and so it is too great a favour to be indulged to you: ----it may be, through your fondness or neglect, they may prove heart-cutting sorrows to you in their advancing years; and then it is a mercy to have them removed, both upon their account, and your own too. A christian parent would much rather follow his child to the grave, than see him grow up an enemy to God and religion, vain and trifling, immersed in the follies of this perishing world, altogether regardless of his soul, and the everlasting concerns of a future state: a conduct, which allows no room to expect to meet his child with

comfort at the bar of GOD ! How do some pious parents go mourning all their days under this heavy burden ! especially, when they see reason to reflect upon themselves, as having been accessory thereto, by their own neglect, in educating their children, or by giving them a bad example, or, by an extravagant foolish indulgence of them to their ruin : this last is, by mistake, called *fondness* ; but, in truth, it is an instance of the most *cruel barbarity* : — once more, perhaps your children, or dear relatives, take up too great a share in your affections, employ your constant thoughts, engross your hearts, and so leave the less for GOD : it is fit such rivals should be removed out of the way.

SERIOUS reflections upon these things, when children or friends are sick, put good parents and relatives upon retiring, and humbling themselves before GOD ; under the apprehension, that he is about to remove from them their dear delights, the desire of their eyes, and their most valuable creature-comforts — they *fast* and *weep* — And then,

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THEY likewise *pray* to GOD in behalf of their sick children or friends. David *besought* GOD for the child.

N. WHEN children, or friends, are sick, it is the best thing we can do for them, to carry them to GOD by *prayer*, to spread their case before him, and to recommend them to his grace and mercy. Thus did *David*.

1. HE *prays for the life of the child*; that the *sickness* might not be *unto death*. But in this petition he is not peremptory; how he ordered his prayer, we may gather from his own words, *who can tell, whether GOD will be gracious to me, that the child may live?* This expression plainly denotes the submission of his mind; he does not pretend to insist upon it; he does not say, *Give me the child's life, or else I die*^c; no: but he carries the affair to GOD, he spreads the case before the throne of grace, there he leaves it, and *let the LORD do what seemeth good in his sight*^d. With this
resigned

^c Gen. xxx. 1.
1 Chr. xix. 13.

^d 1 Sam. iii. 18. and

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resigned frame should all *temporal* blessings,
all *creature-comforts* be asked at the hands
of GOD; and we should be prepared, ei-
ther to have them, or to be without them,
as an infinitely wise and good GOD, the
supreme governor of the world, sees fit.

WHILST our beloved relatives are living,
it is our duty to pray for the continuance
of their lives; especially, when they are
threatened by sickness, or any other cir-
cumstances of hazard and danger; for *who*
can tell, whether GOD will be gracious to
us? We have leave given us, to be earnest
with GOD in prayer for particular bles-
sings; and we may be encouraged herein
from a confidence in his power and general
mercy, though we have no particular pro-
mise to build upon. We cannot be sure
we shall obtain our desire, yet let us pray,
for *who can tell* but GOD will hear our
prayers; and give us an answer of peace.
In the case of sickness, *the prayer of faith*
has often prevailed: while there is life,
there is hope; and while there is hope,
there is room for prayer; and we ought to
be found in the practice of this duty, *espe-*
cially at such seasons; GOD *then* expects
to

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to hear from us, and has encouraged our free applications, by having said, *call upon me in the day of trouble, I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me*^e.

2. IT is to be supposed, that *David* also prayed in favour of the child; that if God did not see fit to spare it's life, *he would take it to himself*.

OUR sick or dying friends should be thus recommended by us to the mercy of God; it is a piece of kindness we owe them; and it is a way in which we may help them, when there is no other way of showing our love, or of helping them, left. There is no doubt, but *David* was concerned for the eternal welfare of his child in the *future* world, if God would not prolong it's life in *this*: for though *David* had not so clear light of the next state of existence, as we *under the gospel* are favoured with; yet he certainly had the *faith* of *another life*, and perhaps exceeded most of the *old-testament* saints in the extent of his knowledge about it: several passages in the book of *Psalms* cannot be well understood, without

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out supposing them to refer to a state of happiness in the *world to come*.

Good christians will do what they can, to assist their children and friends in their best concerns; will help them forward in the way to heaven, all they are able: and when they can no longer keep them; but *He*, who has the best right in them, calls them away, they will give them up to God, and by prayer recommend them to his mercy, borrowing language from the expiring redeemer, *Father, into thy hands we commend their spirits*^f. We may add,

3. IT is reasonable to suppose, that *David*, upon this occasion, gave himself to prayer, as the *best means* he could use, in order to bring his own spirit more entirely into a placid submission to the will of GOD, whatever should be the event of this Providence.

I MAKE no question, but *David*, on this occasion, signified his earnest desire to have his soul wrought into a resigned frame; that how much soever he wished the child's life, yet, that he might thoroughly acquiesce in the will of God, in
case

^f Luke xxiii. 46.

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case he saw fit to determine the matter otherwise. The best method we can take, in order to be prepared for approaching evils, is to *commit* the case to God, beg him to direct and order it as he sees fit, and then be quiet, easy, and resigned, while we expect the event; and to submit without reluctance, if God determines it in a way contrary to our hopes: we have done our duty, and so should be composed.

I N F E R E N C E.

WE may learn from this example of *David*, whither to apply ourselves, in cases of sickness, either of ourselves, or our dear friends; namely, to God: he is the *great physician* of body, as well as of soul, the God *who healeth*; he *killeth and he maketh alive*; there is no sickness or disease upon any particular person, but what is sent by God; it cannot be removed without his leave; it cannot continue beyond the limits of his commission. We should therefore *call upon him in the day of trouble*; *our eyes should be unto the LORD*, as knowing, that *from him cometh our help*. This is our certain duty: but let me here

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add,

add, we are not to neglect the use of means ; a dangerous extreme, which some foolishly run into ! means are appointed and provided by the God of nature, for the *support* of our *bodies*, the *securing* our *health*, and *relieving* our *infirmities* ; and we can expect God's blessing *only* in the regular use of means : we must thankfully use the helps we can procure, but must not rest in them ; always remembering, that no means can kindly operate without God's blessing ; and that the most able physicians are of *no value*, unless *he* directs them to proper methods, and afterwards, by his blessing, makes the means successful. — I cannot better express my great regard for the learned gentlemen of *the faculty*, than by wishing they may at all times have a serious sense of this on their hearts ; and may find themselves exceedingly beneficial to their fellow-creatures, thro' the the divine blessing upon their endeavours ! — It was not *Asa's* crime, that *he sought to the physicians* ; in this he was right, this was his duty : but his sin lay *here*, that he sought *only* to them, he rested *entirely* upon

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upon their skill, depended *solely* upon their
help, and so SOUGHT NOT *to the* LORD^E;
he left GOD quite out of the question, and
expected that relief from the physicians,
which GOD's blessing *alone* could afford.

§ II. LET us view *David's* behaviour,
after the child was actually dead.

THERE was a marvellous change in the
king's conduct; it astonished the whole
court; he had taken on and mourned so
much, while the child lay ill, that they
expected he would have utterly sunk under
the death of it:—but it is quite the re-
verse.—The matter was now concluded;
the child was dead, and so out of the reach
of prayer.

THE primitive saints knew nothing of
praying souls out of *purgatory*; they
were absolute strangers to any such state,
or place: this is a gainful invention of
much later times, and brings in so much
profit to the clergy of the *Romish* church,
that they will scarce ever give up the doc-
trine, as long as they can be so liberally
paid for masses and prayers for the souls of

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the

the deceased. — But this by the bye. — God had signified it to be his will and pleasure, that the child should die; *David* had nothing now to do, but to bend his mind to the will of God, to acquiesce in the appointment of providence, and to submit without murmuring or complaint. And truly the good king seems to be in a lovely frame, to have the full possession of his own soul: and though his passions and affections were all afloat, yet his reason keeps the ascendant, and he behaves like a *hero in religion*. He found himself much affected and grieved; and so he endeavours to reason his mind into a calm and silent composure, by advancing several considerations, which might check immoderate grief, and keep him from acting an indecent part, upon this melancholy occasion; *now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, though he shall not return to me.* Attend, ye children of sorrow, and learn from the king of *Israel*, to dry up your tears, and to sooth your spirits into a placid submission to your afflicted circumstances!

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sicknefs or death of pious friends. 21

HERE is a variety of arguments couched in these few words; let us distinctly consider them.

1. *DAVID* suppresses exorbitant grief, upon occasion of his child's death, from the *unreasonableness* of it; *now the child is dead, wherefore should I fast, or continue weeping?*

WHEN passions grow boisterous, and are not under the controul of reason, there can be nothing but sad disorder and confusion in the soul; the affections and actions will all be irregular in such a situation. We should therefore endeavour, *in our patience, so to possess our souls*, as under any heavy stroke, still to consider, *wherefore should I be thus affected with this providence? is there a sufficient reason to justify my grief? is there not cause to moderate my sorrows? and, when I weep, should it not be, as though I wept not*^h; if I should *be called in question for the ruffle, and tumultuous disorder of my soul this day*, can I give a satisfactory account? have I such a reason to offer, as will vindicate me from all blame?

THIS

^h 1 Cor. vii. 30.

THIS is the best method we can take with ourselves, to quell the passions, and to prevent or suppress disorderly emotions of soul, in times of sorrow : and this is what every good man should endeavour to do.—But all good men are not in the same good temper at all times.—*David*, who behaved in so exemplary a manner, upon the death of this child, run into an extravagant excess of sorrow upon the death of *Absalom* : could one imagine, that he who now says, *wherefore should I fast?* that he, who is now convinced, how unfit and unreasonable excess of sorrow is ; should, upon *that occasion*, vent his passionate grief in such strong expressions of lamentation, *O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom ; would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son !* The good king, as matters then stood, should have thanked God for the deliverance of *himself* and his *faithful subjects* from the ruin intended them ; and instead of this excess of sorrow, should rather have said, *wherefore should I weep?* — this son was in actual rebellion, and fought the life of his father ;

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father ; God had now glorified himself in the destruction and punishment of a wicked, disobedient and unnatural child. Was it fit, *David* should be so grieved and distressed as he was ? *Joab* very justly remonstrated against the king's conduct, as unreasonable and unseemly ; and so *David* himself would have thought at another time. Nor do I know any apology can be made for *David*, unless it be this ; that his heart was overwhelmed, because his son was cut off in the midst of his sins, and there was not the least ground to apprehend his eternal state was safe. — And indeed, it must be allowed to be a most cutting thought to tender parents, and affectionate relatives, to see their wicked friends or children snatched out of the world in the full career of sin and vice ; and no reason to expect to meet them with comfort at the bar of God. — A dreadful case this ! — but even *here* it becomes us, either with *Aaron* to hold our peace^k ; and with *David* to be dumb, and not open our mouths, because God has done it^l : or, if we cannot keep silence upon so sad an

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^k Levit. x. 3.

^l Psal. xxxix. 9.

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occasion, we may ease our burthened minds in the language of good old *Eli*, when *Samuel* discovered to him the judgment GOD had denounced against his house; *It is the LORD, let him do what seemeth him good* ^m.

IT must be owned indeed, that this is a circumstance peculiarly pungent; and the mourning parent or friend will be ready to say, *is there not a cause?* is there not a sufficient reason to mourn, when my dear child, or dearer friend, is not only taken from me, so that I shall see his face no more in this world; but also, I shall never see him with joy in the next, and must hope *not to be with him*, where I fear he is. — Some *allowance* surely must be made for *great tenderness* in such a condition of sorrow! — But, in the case of *good* children and *pious* friends departed, we ought to say, *wherefore should we weep?* and should affect our minds with a sense of the *unreasonableness* of *excessive sorrow* on such occasions.

Do I grieve, as *finding fault with the providence of GOD?* *Jonah*, in a fit of passion,
and

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and resentment against God, said, *I do well to be angry, even unto death*^a: but he knew not what he said. Has not God a right to do what he will with his own? Did he give us our friends, and may he not at pleasure remove them? are they not more properly *his* than *ours*? He has done me no *wrong*; wherefore then should I mourn? — Besides; does not God know what is *fit* to be done, better than I do? can infinite wisdom do an improper thing? or am I vain enough to think, it would have been better, had it been *according to my mind*, and my friend had continued to live? It was a blasphemous saying of *Alphonfus* the Xth. king of *Castile*; “That if he had been by, when
“ God made the world, many things
“ should have been ordered in a better and
“ more elegant manner.” Thus, I fear, many are foolish enough to imagine, that in some instances, they could govern and direct human affairs better than the great God does; and truly this is insinuated to

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be

^a Jon. iv. 9. ° Si in principio mundi ipse Deo adfuisset, multa melius ornatiusq; essent condenda: Or, as *Roderic Sanctius* relates it, Si a principio creationis humanæ Dei altissimi consilio interfuisset, nonnulla melius, ordinatiusq; condita fuisset. *Hist. Hispan.* Part. 4. c. 1.

be the secret thought of the mind, when under affliction it indulges immoderate sorrow. — Again ; can infinite goodness do an *unkind* thing ? though I feel my loss, yet I may be assured, that what God has done, in removing my beloved friends into another world, is all for the best. As they truly loved and served God, so they were dear to him ; and out of affection to them, he shortened their days on earth, that they might sooner be delivered from temptations and troubles, and be put in possession of complete felicity. They have made their escape from a dangerous and tumultuous world, and are now *at rest* with God. However desirous they might have been of longer continuance here, out of love to their dear friends, whom they are lothe to leave ; yet they are now thoroughly pleased with what God has done : their remove is to their everlasting advantage, and they are now unspeakably more happy, than they could ever have expected ; they rejoice, and *wherefore* then *should we mourn* ? will not this be a ground of suspicion, that we love ourselves better than them ? or, that we have a jealousy about their present circumstances ? the *first* is not generous, and the
latter

latter is invidious, and implies a tacit reflection upon their character. The primitive christians were wont to sing triumphant psalms at funerals, to shew the high hopes they had of their departed friends. And certainly, if we sincerely love our friends, and have a good opinion of them, as thorough real christians; we ought rather to rejoice than to mourn, when God advances them to the glories and happiness of the heavenly state: and this, without doubt, is the happy case of all CHRIST's faithful disciples; the very *day* they die, they are *with CHRIST in paradise*^p.

WELL then; if, in the remove of our pious friends, God has done what his infinite wisdom judged best and fittest; and they themselves are fully pleased with what God has done; surely there is reason to ask the question, wherefore should *we* mourn? all extravagant grief should be suppressed as *unreasonable and absurd*.

2. *DAVID* considers the *fruitlessness* of excessive sorrow; and from hence argues himself into composure. It would answer no purpose, with respect to the deceased child, let *David* fast and weep ever so long:

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can I bring him back again? he puts it in the form of a question, which enhances the negation; *can I?* no: I know all my tears, sighs and intreaties will be ineffectual to *bring him back again*, now he has once shot the gulph; his eternal state is fixed, and he shall be seen here no more: to what purpose then should I weep and fast, and protract the expressions of my grief?

WHEN our christian friends have once passed through death, they shall revisit our world no more; their sun is so set, as never more to rise here below: we may ruffle and discompose our spirits, *kick and spurn*, and *fret like a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke*; and by this means lose all the relish of the *comforts* of life, which still remain to us, and unfit ourselves for the *duties* of life; but all to no purpose, our tears are shed in vain, our wishes and prayers return into our own bosoms void: for,

“ DEATH and the grave have neither
“ eyes nor ears.”

Our friends departed are for ever gone from hence, their *places shall know them*

Dr. Watts.

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them *no more*^r. The path of death can be trodden but once^t; there is no such thing as stepping back^t; when Jesus, who *has the keys of death, and of the invisible world*, (*"Adms*) has let our pious friends into it, the door is for ever shut upon them; they are *made pillars in the temple of God*, and *shall go no more out*^u. Farewell then, my dear child, my affectionate wife, my beloved friend, these eyes of flesh shall see thee here no more.

—Affecting thought! what is the separation to be eternal? are we so parted, as never to meet again? oh no! God be thanked, this is not the case! the separation is only for a time, and a short time too: for, says *David*, as a further consideration to silence his grief,

3. *I shall go to him, though he shall not return to me.* The one is as certain, as the other; he cannot come back; I must go to him. This thought of *David* carries in it several hints both of comfort and counsel, with reference to the death of our dear and pious friends: we may enlarge upon it in the following manner.

I. I SHALL

^r Psal. ciii. 16. ^t Est calcanda semel lethi via. *Hor.* ^u Vestigia nulla retrorsum. *id.* ^v Rev. iii. 12.

I. I SHALL go the *same way*, that my deceased friends are already gone; and shall, like them, *return no more* to this world: the awful change, which has passed upon them, does also await me.

AND is this the certain case, that I myself must also die, as others my dear relations have died already! then, instead of lamenting *their deaths*, my main business, my grand concern, should be to prepare for *my own*. *I shall go to* my dear friend, whose death at present greatly affects me; and *her* being now gone, is an alarm to me, to put me in mind of going, and to excite a careful diligence in the work of preparation. “ In what posture am I for
 “ so awful a change? how stand matters
 “ betwixt GOD and my soul? if GOD
 “ should bid me die, am I prepared for
 “ heaven? or could I comfortably compose myself to death, in hope of the
 “ glory of GOD? could I meet this king
 “ of terrors without fear and amazement?
 “ and with chearfulness resign my soul
 “ into the hands of GOD?” At such a
 juncture

junction as this, our business is, not excessively to grieve for our pious friends, who are gone; but to get ready for our own going to the grave, *the house appointed for all living*^x. The death of every friend should be regarded, as a *memento mori*, to put us in mind of our own mortality: our dear friends already deceased are only gone before, have got the start of us a little, neither you nor I can expect to be long after; *the time of our departure is at hand*; it cannot be *far off* from any of us, and may possibly be much *nearer* to us all, than we imagine; for *when a few years at most are come, then we shall go the way, whence we shall not return*^y. Is this the certain case! should we not then endeavour to make the best provision we can for so important an event? we see how death shoots his arrows round about us; some fly *beyond* us, the old are taken; some drop *short* of us, and persons younger than ourselves, in the prime and pride, and flower of life, are removed; some fly *above* us, our superiors die, the kings and princes, and mighty men, fall; others are shot *below* us, and men in lower circumstances

of

^x Job xxx. 23.

^y Job xvi. 22.

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of life give up the ghost. — Well, all this tells me, that my turn will shortly come; an arrow out of death's quiver will soon strike through my heart: let me then bring the matter home to my own spirit, by serious reflection upon my frailty and mortality. This would serve as a spur to greater diligence, and speed in the christian course; and is a much better way of being affected with the death of our friends, than indulging to grief on the mournful occasion. " Our christian
 " friends departed have quite finished their
 " state of trial, they have entirely done
 " with this world, and all the concerns of
 " time, and are laid to sleep in the silent
 " chambers of death; where there is no
 " *work, no device, nor knowledge, nor wis-*
 " *dom*^z; nothing to be done for their own
 " souls more: to the same place we our-
 " selves are *hastening*; the stroke might
 " have been levelled at me, *as well as at*
 " *them, or instead of them*; and for
 " what I know, it may reach me next.
 " In the serious thoughts of this, I turn
 " myself to God, assuming the words of
 " the devout psalmist, *LORD make me*
 " *know mine end, and the measure of my*
 " *days,*

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“ days, *what it is?* that *I may know how*
“ *frail I am!* so teach me to number my
“ days, that *I may apply my heart unto*
“ *wisdom*^a. ” Would to God, the death
of every friend might have this desirable
effect upon us! that we may fit looser to
this world, and be more exact in our pre-
parations for the *next*. We should con-
sider, that in every pious relative departed,
“ we have *one* attachment *less* to earth,
“ *one* argument *more* for heaven. ” —A
most beautiful thought, perfectly just, and
elegantly expressed!^b Many of my godly
friends are entered into eternity; they
F cannot

^a Ps. xxxix. 4. and xc. 12.

^b *Vid.* Dr. Colman's sermon on the death of *Samuel Holden*, Esq; where the character of that worthy gentleman is given by extracts from his own letters; which contain some things inimitably grand and sublime; and give the portraiture of a holy, devout and heavenly soul, in the strongest and most lively colours. p. 15.

N. B. This sermon was preached at the publick *Lecture* in *Boston, New-England*, Sept. 4, 1740, in the audience of his excellency the GOVERNOR, the honourable the COUNCIL, and the *Representatives* of the province of the *Massachusetts-Bay*; and printed by their order.

Such regard was paid to the memory of this great and good man in *New-England*; and I wish every gentleman in *Old-England* were more like him, in a steady regard to GOD and religion.

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cannot be *brought back again*; neither *shall they return to me* : but in a little time *I shall go to them*; and then my eternal state will, like theirs, be fixed, and I shall no more return into this world. A very important consideration this ! let me improve it, by reflecting in the following manner.

I. I SHALL not return, *to enjoy any of the comforts of this life.*

My dear friends departed are dead to these delights of the children of men ; what is all this world to them ? I shall shortly be in like circumstances ; and therefore I will sit loose to creature-enjoyments now ; I will *not set my affections on things on the earth* ; nor suffer my soul to be entangled with any of the most agreeable things, I can here be possessed of : I will not set my heart upon such an empty, vain world, which I must soon have done with for ever. The good things of the present life, which GOD is pleased to give me, I will thankfully use, as accommodations on my journey through this pilgrimage state ; but still my heart shall be set upon my heavenly home, and I will still be preparing
myself

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myself for the more important, the everlasting blessings, which await me at my journey's end.

2. I SHALL not return, *to be exercised with any of the afflictions of life.*

MY deceased friends are got out of the reach of this world's sorrows; death will shortly put a period to mine also; these things are not to last thus always; I will therefore make the best I can of them, and patiently submit to whatever trials my heavenly father sees fit to exercise me with. — The prospect of death affords the *good* man a noble support under the afflictions of this life; he can see to the end of all his sorrows: but the *wicked* are left miserable and comfortless, to the sad impressions of *worldly sorrow*, which *worketh death*: when they are struggling with the difficulties of life, they can derive no comfort from the next world; the thoughts of it are most dreadful; their present troubles are but *the beginning of sorrows*; in the future state, a much more terrible and tragical scene will be opened; and they shall *drink the dregs of the cup of the LORD's wrath*, which they now comparatively

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but lightly taste of. Oh dreadful state of the *impenitent* sinner! but the *good* christian, under the heaviest pressures, can fetch divine supports from the prospects of a future glorious eternity. Heaven will make amends *for all* at last; and the hopes of heaven may make us easy *under all* at present.

3. I SHALL not return, *to do any of the work and business of life.*

My departed friends have done the work of life; and my working-time will also soon be over; I will therefore make the most of my present time, and improve it to the best purposes. There is no rectifying any mistakes of life, in the case of those who are already departed; they *shall not return* to this world, their state of trial is over: —My time is also drawing towards a close; how careful should I then be to spend it well! to *finish the work, which God has given me to do*, before my days on earth are ended! I will consider myself as working for eternity, and will therefore, with all my might, and without any delay, apply myself closely to my work.

THUS

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THUS may we profitably improve the consideration, that we are to follow our friends into another world; that we shall *go the way*, which they *are gone* already, and which neither they nor we shall ever more *return*. — But the expression of *David*, with respect to his deceased child [*I shall go to him*] does not barely mean, that he should *follow* him, *go the same way*, die as he did; it also suggests an argument of strong consolation, and may greatly abate our sorrows, on account of our pious relatives deceased.

II. I SHALL go to be with them, where they now are.

OH delightful thought! what source of comfort is here! my dear deceased friends are not lost, but only gone before; I hope, with inconceivable raptures of joy, to meet them e're long in the regions of immortal bliss! and there we shall never be parted more! they are lost *to us* indeed at present, but yet they are not *absolutely* lost; they have got the start of us, reached heaven

THUS

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heaven before us: but it is to be hoped, that we are in the way to that blessed world; and shall shortly see them there, dressed in the garments of salvation. What transports of joy will then fill both us and them! Oh how vast must the mutual pleasure of christian friends be, when they meet in the heavenly world! it is impossible to conceive the greatness of their joy, when they shall congratulate one another's safe arrival in the realms of glory, at an eternal remove from all sins and snares, all dangers and troubles! when their happy souls shall relate the instances of divine grace, under the conduct of which they were carried safe through a dangerous world to a state of consummate felicity; " though we should not be able
 " (says one of the most judicious preachers
 " of this last age ^c) as long as we live,
 " to review former endearments without
 " pathological concern; yet there shall be
 " a joyful meeting, when all tears shall
 " be wiped away. And how grateful will
 " be the surprize on both sides, to find
 " one another so vastly improved, beyond
 " what

^c Dr. Evans, in a sermon upon 2 Kings iv. 26. p. 23, 24.

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“ what the warmest affection could discover at the time of separation! how cheerfully will *they* join together in the triumphs of heaven, *who* often united their prayers here to God in the heavens! how delightful *their* mutual converse, *who* can say, they have been mutual helps in the way to that world! though the loss of such a companion now may be a melancholy thought at parting, that re-union will make full amends, without the danger of another separation.”

I MAKE no doubt, but *David* comforted himself with this thought, that his child was *gone to* heaven, and that he should *meet* it there. The *Old-Testament* saints had the believing expectation of a state of perfect blessedness hereafter; though not so clear a discovery of it as the *gospel* furnishes us with. Christian parents have full reason to conclude, with reference to their children who die *infants*, that *it is well* with their souls in the other world; for the promise is to *believers* and to *their posterity*: in the original promise made to
Abra-

Abraham, the father of the faithful, in which all believers are interested, GOD engages *to be a GOD unto thee and to thy seed*^d; and, says the apostle, *GOD is not ashamed to be called their GOD, for he hath prepared for them a city*^e: so that, by virtue of the covenant-relation between GOD and them, the infant-children of believers are entitled to the heavenly happiness, *the city prepared for them*, as well as the parents themselves: and this promise, without doubt, will be made good to all the seed of believers, who do not, by their own actual sins, put a bar in the way; which infants, who are not come to years of understanding, to know good and evil, are not capable of doing. Let christian parents then be comforted, if GOD see fit to remove their infant-children from them; and let them please themselves with the hopes of meeting them again at GOD's right hand in glory.

AND as to those, our dear children or friends, who have *grown up into life*, and have chosen GOD for their GOD, we are certain, that *to die* to them is *gain*; their souls
ascend

^d Gen. xvii. 7. ^e Heb. xi. 16.

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ascend to heaven, and are joined to the assembly of the spirits of just men made perfect: wherefore then should we weep? we should rather congratulate the happy alteration of their circumstances; — a sinful, troublesome world left behind; — a state of perfect holiness, rest and joy entered into: and if they make this blessed exchange in *early life*, though their relatives and friends, and the world too, sustain the *greater loss*, yet it is much *happier* for them: they are *sooner* at rest; let us rejoice in *their* gain. *Dionysius Longinus*, who was put to death by order of *Aurelian* the Roman emperor, closed life with these remarkable words; “ This world is nothing, but a prison; happy therefore he, who gets soonest out of it, and gains his liberty.” How should we then be pleased, when GOD, by death, enlarges godly friends. “ Was not *self-love* too predominant, and our *faith* of invisible realities too weak, we should rejoice at a pious *relative's* admission into the society of the blessed. We congratulate upon any *petty* advantages, gained in

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“ this

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“ this *low* state of being; and again, we
“ *mourn* their advancement to the highest
“ degrees of *honour* and *felicity*; because
“ out of our *ken*. Such *awkward* and
“ preposterous creatures are we.^d”

LET us then try whether we cannot lay aside *self-love*; at least so far, as to enjoy a secret pleasure in the sublime happiness of our deceased godly friends: especially, as we ourselves are aspiring after the *same* happiness, and hope e’re long to *meet* them in our father’s house above.

I WISH to GOD, these considerations may come with full force upon all of us in every day of sorrow! and may they help to suppress *our* grief, who are, in a particular manner, affected by *that* awful *stroke* of providence, which has given occasion for the *present discourse*!

IT is too tender a point for me, to enlarge upon the character of my dear deceased relative, from this place. I shall only say, that she entered upon the strict profession of religion *early*; it was carried

as

^d *Vid.* Dr. Colman, ut *sup.* p. 14.

as an even thread through her whole life, and influenced her conduct in every relation of life. Her race was short, but she run it well: nor do I any more *question* her being *now* happy in the heavenly world, than *I doubt* my own *present* existence in this: my *senses* assure me of *the one*; my *faith*, assisted by my *reason*, as strongly perswades me of *the other*.

I CONCLUDE all in the borrowed words of *that excellent christian*, referred to already; ^c who, writing to a friend, upon the death of his daughter, expresses himself in this admirable manner: “ My dear *child* is gone to rest, and I hope “ we shall soon *meet* in happiness. Had “ she lived according to the course of *na-* “ *ture*, our separation had been much “ longer.” [A thought peculiarly comfortable to survivors, who are got forward in life, under the loss of friends, who are cut off in their younger years.] “ She “ is, I trust, safely landed in the *heavenly* “ *Canaan*; I am still upon the *sea*, but “ I hope not far from *port*. Hours, days “ and

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^c *Vid.* Dr. Colman, *ut sup.* p. 18.

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" and years press on, as the waves, and
" shortly we shall all be out of sight.
" May our motion be *swifter*, the *nearer*
" we approach to the *center* of our hap-
" piness, our desires more ardent, our
" preparations greater ; that so *an entrance*
" *may be administered more abundantly to*
" *us into the everlasting kingdom.*"



A HYMN.

A
H Y M N.

I.

OUR pious friends depart, and die ;
Their absence makes us grieve !
Their souls with JESUS are in heaven ;
This thought should us relieve !

II.

To us *no more* they *shall return*,
But we *to* them *shall go* ;
We hope to reach the heavenly world,
And dwell with JESUS too.

III.

There glory sits on every face,
Love smiles in every eye ;
There shall our tongues relate the grace,
That brought us safe on high.

IV.

Farewel, dear friend, a short farewel,
Till we shall meet again :
Ne'er to part more, but live like Gods,
Though now we die like men.

O blef-

A H Y M N.

V.

O blessed soul, thy race was short,
And thou *didst* run it well;
Thy heaven is sure, but what thy joys,
No mortal man can tell!

VI.

Dear soul, we leave thee to enjoy
Thy JESUS, and thy GOD;
Till we shall drop our cloaths of flesh,
And reach thy blest abode.

VII.

Come sovereign LORD, dear Saviour come,
Remove these parting days;
Send thy bright wheels to fetch us home;
That hour, how long it stays!

A B R I E F

A
BRIEF ACCOUNT
O F

Mrs. *IREMONGER*'s
LIFE and CHARACTER.

THE strength of my affection to dear Mrs. *Iremonger*, and the tender impression her death has made upon me (which I expect to carry the sense of to the grave) would not allow me to enlarge upon her amiable character from the pulpit: I did not dare to trust myself in a *public assembly* upon so moving a subject. But I think it a *debt* due to *her* precious *memory*; a proper *acknowledgment* to the *grace* of God, both *in* her, and *with* her; and, I hope, it may be of much *advantage* to surviving *relatives* and *friends*, as well as to *many others* (especially those of the *younger class*)

to

to see some *sketches* of a life from first to last truly *religious*, and very *exemplary*.

SHE was the only daughter of the late Sir *John Fryer* Bart, by his second Lady, the youngest daughter of Sir *Gabriel Roberts*, formerly an eminent *Turkey-Merchant*, greatly honoured and esteemed by all who knew him. In the year 1721 Sir *John Fryer* was Lord-Mayor of the city of *London*; which high station he greatly adorned, and filled up with honour; and he deservedly acquired, from men of *all parties*, the character of an *upright* and *impartial* magistrate, in the administration of justice: to which he added unwearied endeavours, to check the growth of wickedness, and to *reform* a dissolute age. On the *fifth* of *June* in this year *Lady-Mayorefs* was delivered of twins, a *son* and a *daughter*. The son [baptized *Gabriel*] was removed by death in three weeks; the daughter [baptized *Delicia*] continued to live; but appeared to have so tender and weak a constitution, such *mala stamina vitæ*, that it was scarce expected she could ever be reared.

IN 1723, on the *sixteenth* of *August*, it pleased GOD to remove *Lady Fryer* : from which time, agreeably to her mother's dying request, the care of *the child* was by Sir *John* recommended to her *aunt* ; who readily undertook the precious charge : and through the blessing of GOD, was greatly instrumental, by an indefatigable diligence, to preserve her life, and by the most proper instruction, to form her mind to the love of virtue and religion : thus was she her *friend* for *both* worlds. This Mrs. *Iremonger* was very sensible of, and forward to acknowledge both *living* and *dying*. The important trust was executed with a watchful care and an affectionate love, equal to that of the most tender mother.

To say the truth, it was impossible not to be fond of her ; so lovely a child was she in her *person*, and so engaging in her whole *manner* ; every thing united in her, that was pleasing and agreeable.

As her mind gradually opened, she discovered all along an extraordinary *genius* ; something above the common standard of her age. She was always very desirous of knowledge, and had

a *laudable inquisitiveness* ; a sure prognostick of great proficiency ! She would not remain ignorant for want of enquiry : and she had a *quickness of apprehension*, that made her easily susceptible of any *new ideas* : she imbibed knowledge so fast, and with so much readiness, that it was really a pleasure to instruct her ; and it afforded great delight, to see what quick improvements a well-disposed mind is capable of. She was, besides, blessed with a retentive *memory*, and a solidity of *judgment*, superior to her years ; to which, being added constant and unwearied *application*, no wonder her proficiency was considerable, to the admiration of all her friends : Such rich soil, so well cultivated, could scarce fail of producing a plentiful crop of the most delicious fruit !

SHE soon became mistress of any thing she attempted, and would not willingly be conquered by appearing difficulties : notwithstanding the frequent interruptions, which were occasioned by illness, she made a great progress in *human* and *divine* knowledge ; and, like the infant JESUS, as she grew in *stature*, so she increased in *wisdom*,

wisdom, and in favour with GOD and man^a. She was indeed the *darling* and *delight* of all, who were well acquainted with her, and had an opportunity of observing her *improvements* and *behaviour*.

SHE had always a particular relish for *the Sacred Writings*, and conversed much with them. The *Bible* did not lie by her, as a neglected book; every day she read more or less in it. *From a child she knew the holy scriptures*; and regarded them, as what were *able* and designed to *make* her *wise unto salvation, through faith which is in CHRIST JESUS*^b: she all her days valued *the word* of GOD, as containing both the *rule* of our *duty*, and the *charter* of our *hopes*; representing both what GOD *requires of us*, and what we may *expect from him*; according to *this* she conducted her *life*, formed her *temper*, and regulated her *faith*.

SHE very early discovered a *serious sense of religion*, and a great desire to approve herself to GOD, in the daily exercise of *grace*, and the steady practice of *duty*. She made a great and speedy progress in the

H 2

spiritual

^a Luke ii. 52.

^b 2 Tim. iii. 15.

spiritual and divine life ; her love to GOD improving continually, together with every other grace and virtue. She remembered, that she had been entered into *covenant* with GOD in her infancy, and always considered herself as his servant, bound to love and obey him : she knew well her great obligations to the LORD her *maker*, her *preserver*, her constant *benefactor*, and her merciful *redeemer* : *gratitude* therefore, as well as *duty*, influenced her *obedience* to GOD's commandments ; which was not only *uniform* and *entire*, but also *pleasant* and *delightful*. She *made haste and delayed not to keep GOD's commandments*^c : whatever appeared to her, as matter of *duty*, she most chearfully applied herself to the practice of it, without *conferring with flesh and blood* : and she was very diligent in *proving what was that good and acceptable and perfect will of GOD*^d.

IN consequence hereof she soon began to think of renewing her *baptismal-covenant* at the LORD's *table*, and of remembering the death of her dear redeemer *in the way of his own appointment*. She thought herself

^c Ps. cxix. 60.^d Rom. xii. 2.

self bound by her christian *profession*, to observe this sacred *institution* of her LORD and MASTER. [And by the bye, I must say, it is matter of much surprize to me, that any, who call themselves by the name of CHRIST, can live in the *allowed* neglect of it.] With this design, and that she might be duly prepared to be a welcome guest at that feast, she carefully examined what the *scriptures* said in reference to this holy ordinance; and she perused several *practical writings* on the subject; both to *inform* her judgment, and to *enliven* her *affections*. I took frequent opportunities, when I heard of her design, to converse with her upon the head; and was greatly rejoiced to find, she had both the *justest notions* of the nature of the ordinance, and the *strongest disposition* to partake of it; her *head* was well informed, and her *heart* was well inclined.

I REMEMBER, with exquisite pleasure, what a serious, lovely frame of soul she discovered at that time! and I cannot forbear transcribing a few passages out of a letter, which she conveyed to me, when she had come to a resolution to engage in
this

this solemn affair ; which show the workings of her gracious heart, and how solicitous she was to be rightly qualified for what she was *undertaking*, that so she might be accepted by GOD in it.—“ I must
“ own, after having read books on this
“ head, I have been afraid, I have not
“ been worthy to receive the LORD’S-
“ supper : the love to GOD, faith in
“ CHRIST, and the many other graces
“ required, I have found to be so cold in
“ me ; my thoughts engaged so little upon
“ heavenly things, my repentance so
“ weak ; that I have been ready to say,
“ surely GOD will not accept. What has
“ comforted me under these apprehensions
“ has been, that my own merits avail
“ nothing, but it is through CHRIST’S
“ merits I must be accepted ; and that I
“ hope it is my desire to love GOD better.
“ ——I take this sacrament to be a great
“ means of obtaining strength to perform
“ duties and avoid sins : Satan will not
“ then have so much the power over me,
“ when I have given myself to the LORD ;
“ and I trust, if I do it sincerely, though
“ with many weaknesses, GOD will ac-
“ cept,

“ cept, and not suffer me to be drawn
“ aside. I do by this ordinance take the
“ LORD to be my GOD and Father ;
“ and do give up myself to him, as his
“ child, devoted to his service, resolving
“ to engage for GOD against the world ;
“ and I trust he will not forsake me,
“ while I keep fast to him. I hope my
“ choosing in this solemn way to give up
“ myself to GOD, is from a right princi-
“ ple, and not for by-ends. It cannot,
“ I think, be for the applause of this
“ world ; they will rather laugh at and
“ despise me : but I hope, through GOD’s
“ grace, neither to let the smiles of the
“ world tempt me, nor the terrors of it
“ frighten me from keeping close to GOD.
“ And it is my deliberate choice ; I cannot
“ make a better ; there is not any thing in
“ this world, that can satisfy an immortal
“ soul, or stand one in any stead another
“ day. The Christian’s life appears to me
“ the most agreeable of any in the world ;
“ they enjoy all the worldly man can,
“ and infinitely more ; they have nothing
“ to allay their joy : when the worldly
“ man has met with disappointments in
“ life,

“ life, all his joys are fled, he has nothing
“ to support him; but the christian has
“ all in his GOD he can desire, &c. ”

HAVING thus carefully counted the cost, and with serious deliberation thought over this important affair; she came to the LORD's table, *December 4, 1737*; when she was in the middle way between *sixteen* and *seventeen* years of age: thus *early* did she *seek* and *serve* GOD: she saw the reasonableness of giving him her *youth*, her best and first days; and how fit it was *betimes* to bind her soul by a *sacred vow* to his service, that she might be better able to withstand the enemies of her salvation, and overcome the temptations, which she expected to meet with in the world.

ABOUT this time of her *first* receiving the sacrament of the *LORD's-supper*, she drew up a solemn *covenant-engagement*, whereby she bound her soul to GOD in the strongest manner; it is in her own hand-writing, and signed with her name. I am willing to transcribe it, for the advantage of any *young christians*; who, being influenced by so good an example, may be disposed to an imitation. Oh would to GOD there
might

“ tion, and declared thyself willing, thro’
“ JESUS CHRIST, to enter into covenant
“ with sinful dust and ashes, a revolted
“ creature as I am. But such is the
“ mercy of GOD!

“ LORD, I most thankfully and hum-
“ bly accept thy gracious proposal, and
“ would now enter into covenant with
“ the most high GOD.

“ I CALL heaven and earth to witness,
“ nay, I appeal to the all-knowing GOD,
“ the great searcher of hearts, that I am
“ serious and sincere in what I now do;
“ and that, with the highest satisfaction,
“ and full consent of my soul, I now
“ yield myself to the LORD: with great
“ shame I confess my sins; with a broken,
“ bleeding heart I declare my abhorrence
“ of them; I most heartily detest every
“ false way; I hate sin with a perfect ha-
“ tred; and do now swear to GOD, that
“ I will never allow myself in any known
“ sin, and will diligently watch against all
“ temptations to it.

“ I SOLEMNLY abjure the world, the
“ flesh, and the devil, as the avowed ene-
“ mies both of GOD, and of my soul. I
“ disclaim

“ disclaim every thing, that stands in op-
“ position, or is contrary to GOD. I so-
“ lemnly renounce the glories, and vanities
“ of this world. I will allow myself no
“ pleasures of sense, which would tend to
“ draw my heart from the blessed GOD ;
“ whom I now make a deliberate choice
“ of, as my supreme happiness : *the*
“ LORD *is my portion, saith my soul*, and
“ I will never unsay it.

“ I TAKE GOD the father, to be my
“ GOD and my father, my sovereign
“ LORD, to whom I vow perpetual al-
“ legiance and fidelity. — I take JESUS
“ CHRIST, the Son of GOD, to be my
“ Saviour ; I accept of him as offered in
“ the gospel, as an all-sufficient Saviour ;
“ I bottom all my hopes of salvation upon
“ him ; and come unto God through him,
“ as the mediator of the new covenant ; I
“ receive him as a prophet, a priest, and a
“ king, and yield myself to his conduct
“ and government. — I take the HOLY
“ GHOST for my guide, my sanctifier and
“ comforter ; to his directions and influ-
“ ences I submit myself, and resolve ne-

“ ver to quench the spirit, nor to resist his
“ gracious motions.

“ THUS do I fully and absolutely, and
“ without the least reserve, give up, dedi-
“ cate, and devote myself to the Al-
“ mighty God, Father, Son, and Holy
“ Ghost; into whose glorious name I
“ was baptized. I renew my baptismal
“ engagements this day. I take the bonds
“ of the covenant upon myself; and *join*
“ myself *unto the LORD in a perpetual*
“ *covenant never to be forgotten.* I bind
“ myself to him by an everlasting obliga-
“ tion, never to be dissolved or cancelled.
“ I strictly promise to obey God’s com-
“ mands, and placidly submit to the dis-
“ posals of his providence; *let the LORD*
“ *do with me, what seemeth good in his*
“ *fight.*

“ THIS is my free, my deliberate and
“ sincere resolution, which, by the grace
“ of God, I will never alter. *Amen! so*
“ *be it!* and the covenant, which I now
“ make on earth, may it be ratified in
“ heaven!

To

“ To this covenant, and all things
“ contained in it, I most heartily
“ subscribe ; promising and re-
“ solving, by the assistance of
“ divine grace (which, with the
“ most importunate earnestness,
“ I ask of GOD) to live up to what
“ I have here engaged. So help
“ me GOD.

DELICIA FRYER.

“ December 13, 1737, having re-
“ ceived the Sacrament of the
“ LORD's-supper, the beginning
“ of this month ; *the first time.*”

THIS young Lady, having thus *joined* herself *unto the LORD in a perpetual covenant, never to be forgotten*, was studious in after-life to behave, as one devoted unto GOD ; she was careful to pay the vows she had made, and to walk closely with GOD in an uniform course of obedience to all his commands. And indeed religion had taken fast hold of her heart ; and she *adorned the doctrine* of CHRIST her Saviour and Lord, by a regular and upright conversation.

SHE

SHE made conscience of attending the exercises of religious worship: she neglected none of the duties of the *closet*, the *family*, or the *church*; but as she valued communion with God, so she gladly embraced all opportunities and means of enjoying it.

THE LORD'S-day was her *delight*; and with great pleasure she attended the *public* worship of God on that day; nor would she ever be absent, unless providentially hindered: she loved to be always *early* in the house of God, that she might bear her part in *all* the exercises of religion, to be *there* performed: her behaviour *there* was unaffected, but always serious and solemn, and such as evidenced her sincere desire to be *accepted* in what she did, and to *profit* thereby. When *public* worship was ended, she took care not to forget what she had been doing; she went to hear God's word, that she might *know* her duty, with an intent to *practise* it: with this view she usually, when she returned home, committed to writing the heads, and principal parts of the sermons, she had *that day* heard: these she often reviewed, to impress

press them upon her *memory*, that they might not lose their weight and influence; but might be always ready at hand, to warm her *heart*, and direct her *behaviour*.

SHE had a great abhorrence of every thing, that appeared like *ostentation*: her religion was not put on, like fine cloaths, to make a *shew*; but she wore it constantly for *use* and *service*. Nevertheless she was neither ashamed, nor afraid to *own* religion; she was not to be laughed out of it by the *sneer* of fools, nor would she decline the exercises of it out of *complaisance* to any. The *Roman* orator long ago made this observation; "No man is really pious, " who is ashamed or afraid to be so." ^e

As she grew up in life, her relish of *sacred* things increased continually; her improvements in *grace* and *holiness* were very conspicuous.

BUT though the *service* of her God, and the *concerns* of her *soul* engaged her *first* and *principal* care (as they should in all persons) yet she was very diligent to gain an acquaintance with all *other* things, which

^e Nemo pius est, qui pietatem cavet. Cicero.

which might fit her for usefulness in life ; and render her capable of managing, with prudence and skill, whatever secular affairs might fall to *her share*, and become her *proper province*.

SHE was very fond of *reading*, and filled up her time in this way, more than most people. By this means her mind was richly stored with knowledge, both for her own *entertainment*, and for the *conduct of life*. She knew how to employ her leisure hours, and had no need to have recourse to the amusements of the age, to pass away (or, as the modish phrase is, *to kill*) time ; she had none lying upon her hands.

SHE *took* a great deal of pleasure in conversing with friends, whom she valued and esteemed ; and never failed to *give* them pleasure. She did not talk a great deal ; but when she saw fit to speak, it was always to the purpose ; and she evidently discovered a *strong judgment*, and a very *exact knowledge* of things ; which made her opinion much regarded, and her advice attended to by those, who had opportunity to be favoured with it. She was not
fond

fond of a large acquaintance; but where she professed friendship to any, she was always disposed to friendly offices. She had too much *integrity* and *uprightness*, to be able to pretend friendship, without a design of supporting the pretension; nor did she ever practise the modish art of dissimulation. A greatness of soul would not allow her to *appear* or *profess* one thing, and to *be* or *act* another. Nor was any thing more disagreeable to her, than a *conduct* repugnant to *character*; especially, where *religion* was likely to suffer.

SHE was always very *modest* and *humble* in her discourse; and, I believe, never said a thing with a design to commend herself; nor did she affect to censure others: two errors in conversation, which are generally sworn companions, and really give a vast disgust to a generous spirit. But those who are full of *themselves*, will gladly take all occasions to lessen *others*.

SHE had a noble *firmness of mind*, which kept her calm and undisturbed in all occurrences; so that she was never much *elated*, nor much *depressed*, by any thing that befel her.

K

SHE

SHE was very *grave* and *solid* in her temper, but at the same time *easy* and *cheerful*; and much disposed to *pleasant* and *innocent* mirth.

THE *ample* fortune, which God had favoured her with, never made her either *vain* or *arrogant*: she considered riches, as a *talent* to be improved; and was very careful *well* to improve them; liberally contributing to cases of *real necessity*: but according to CHRIST's direction, she did her alms in the most *private* manner; not seeking *applause* from the *world*, but doing it out of *conscience* to God, and a *benevolent disposition* to the *distressed*.

IT is no wonder that a young Lady, very amiable in her *person*, of a large *fortune*, and of the most admired *accomplishments*, should be *soon* taken notice of, when she grew up; and proposals of *marriage* be *early* made. But she had formed two resolutions, in reference to this grand and important affair of life, which evidenced her prudence and wisdom; and from which, I am persuaded, no consideration in the world could have tempted her to recede: namely, — That she would never take a step towards it, but
with

with the approbation of her *aunt* ; whom, with the highest reason, she esteemed her *sure*, her *faithful*, and her *best* friend : [Did *young* persons universally take this method, and advise with parents and friends upon a matter of this consequence, there would be more likelihood of satisfaction in that relation of life ; or however, the reflection would be less distressing upon a disappointment]—The other was, that she would not think of entering into so near a relation with any one ; who was not a gentleman of an established reputation for *virtue*, and a strict regard to *religion*. A resolution this, becoming every true christian ! [One would wonder, if either *man* or *woman*, who professes a regard for God and *heaven*, should ever be willing to be so nearly related to any one, who despises both, and is abandoned to lust and vice !] —Mrs. *Iremonger* had too great a spirit to be tempted with worldly *honours*, or high-swalling *titles* ; a *pious* and *virtuous* man, who would go along with her in the way to heaven, and be assisting to her therein, was the person she would *prefer* ; nor should any one be *admitted* the *companion* of her *life*, who

was void of those *heavenly dispositions*.——

And I must beg leave to say (which I do with exquisite pleasure and sincere thankfulness to God) she was in this affair *highly favoured*, and had in a *husband* all that she could ever have *wished* : as he found no *desirable qualification* wanting in *her*. ——

Blessed union and harmony of kindred minds! how sweetly did this *happy pair* walk hand in hand towards heaven! how strongly were their souls knit together by bonds of sacred friendship, and the sincerest affection! ——What a prospect was here of the highest satisfaction and comfort! what hope resulted from hence of many years felicity, such as this imperfect world can admit, even to the height of human happiness, modelled and governed by the laws of religion! ——But the supreme disposer of all things has determined otherwise; ——the union is dissolved; ——the dear *wife* is removed: ——she has had the honour and privilege of being quickly called up to the world of eternal light and bliss——leaving her relatives and friends sighing and lamenting; as it becomes us to do in a *proper degree*, but so far as to congratulate

gratulate her safe arrival in the regions of immortal joy and glory. — LORD, we adore ! we submit to the awful providence, ———“ Thy will be done ! ”

THOUGH in this situation Mrs. *Iremonger* was possessed of as much happiness as this world can afford, and had every thing that heart could wish ; yet she was not at all *high-minded*, but at the furthest remove from *pride* ; she neither envied any *above* her the grandeur, which pleased them ; nor contemned those, whom providence had set *below* her, in circumstances less grateful : this part of her character is handsomely represented by one, who knew her well, and is very exact in making his observations ; in a letter to a friend, in which he takes notice of the death of Mrs. *Iremonger*, he writes thus : “ She has scarcely
“ ly left any body equal to her in a noble
“ negligence of worldly honour and glory ;
“ and yet perfectly mistress of all decent
“ behaviour, and appearing always in a
“ proper character ; unaffected and genuine gravity, mixed with good humour,
“ setting her actions in a graceful and
“ beauteous light. ”

SHE

SHE was an illustrious example of *patience* under affliction ; and had a talent of bearing pain and sickness, beyond what is common. In her *last illness* she went through a vast deal with an amazing composure. She was indeed very desirous to have lived, if God had seen fit : and no wonder ; since she had every thing here below, that could make life *desirable* to *herself* ; or render her a *blessing* to *all* about her ; which was the *grand* thing she always endeavoured and had in view.

BUT notwithstanding her great desire to have continued longer with her friends, and to have been further useful on *earth* ; yet she was entirely resigned to the will of God, “ having a *good degree of hope* (to use her own words) *as to a future world.*” [And truly, if *she* had not foundation for such hope, I know not *who* can have !] For though she had the sentence of death within herself, and for many weeks apprehended she should not recover ; though she saw her flesh *consuming*, and felt the tiresome pains of *dissolving* nature, yet she remained composed ; no fretfulness, nor murmuring ; no dread, nor fear ; not one repining

repining or disheartening word. — But as she *lived*, so she *died*; a pattern of *both*, I am bold to say, to all her surviving relatives: — It is my earnest wish and prayer for myself, “So may I live, so may I die;” nor do I scruple to own, that I have learned many things from her both *living* and *dying*. Indeed her vast improvements in religion, especially in the *four* or *five* last years of her life, were beyond what I ever discerned in any person so young; nor did I ever know a *temper* and a *life* more entirely under the governing influence of *reason* and *religion*. Great were the hopes and expectations, which her particular friends, and even her most distant acquaintance, had formed of her extensive usefulness for many years to come: and such as knew her best were no way apprehensive, that she would have disappointed those hopes and expectations, had God seen fit to have prolonged her desirable life.

BUT *that* was too great a blessing for us to obtain; her *work* was *done* betimes, and therefore it was fit she should be early rewarded! God called her home, and she
breathed

breathed out her soul into the hands of her dear redeemer on November the 30th last past, in the *twenty-fourth* year of her age: so soon did this *flower* fade and *fall away*. She was cut off in the *prime of life*; but nevertheless she *came to the grave in a full age*; full of *grace*, and ripe for *glory*.

“ ——— Though short her date!

“ *Virtue*, not rolling suns, the mind
manures.

“ That life is long, which answers life’s
great end.

“ The time, that bears no fruit, deserves
no name;

“ The man of wisdom is the man of
years.” ^f

THIS thought should quiet our minds under the present sore trial. May the God of all consolation revive our fainting spirits! and may this melancholy providence instruct, awaken, and assist all surviving relatives, to keep in mind, that *here we have no continuing city*; and make us *seek more earnestly that which is to come*;

^f *Vid.* The Complaint; Night the fifth, p. 45.

come ; even a city, which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God ; of which city our dear departed relative has had the dignity and honour to take an earlier possession. While we are still engaged in a hazardous warfare, it is no small relief to a mind rightly framed, to consider that those, who were dear to us, are removed to a place of perfect security, out of the reach of all danger for ever. May divine grace conduct us safe through the dangers of life, and give us a joyful meeting at last with our dear friends, already exalted to God's right hand in glory ! we follow them now in our thoughts and affections ; and hope e're long to follow them in our persons ! It is one design of providence in removing our godly and dear friends, to make us love this world less, and heaven more ; to call us off from groveling here below, to the believing contemplation and hopes of the joys above.

“ — Friends, our chief treasure !
how they drop ?

“ How the world falls to pieces round
about us,

L

“ And

“ And leaves us in a ruin of our joy ?

“ What says this transportation of my friends ?

“ It bids me love the place, where *now* they dwell,

“ And scorn this wretched spot, they leave so poor. ^s

THUS have I given a *few imperfect* sketches of a most lovely and admirable character. It is indeed but a rough draught; the *copy* is far short of the bright *original*. Many more useful hints might have been suggested. Nor am I in the least apprehensive of being censured, as having exceeded in commendation of my late dear *niece*. She was *all* I have said, and vastly *more*. Those, who were *most intimately* acquainted with her, especially in the latter years of life, will discern several chasms in the account, which might be filled up with advantage.

SHE is here represented (though in a feeble and faint light, yet) as exhibiting an illustrious example, every way worthy of imitation. Her surviving *relatives* will think

^s *Vid.* The Complaint ; *Night the seventh* ; p. 62.

think it an honour, to have been allied to so excellent a lady: — May *we all* follow her, even as she followed CHRIST! — Others also, I hope, will improve in their *spiritual* interests, by having so engaging a pattern set in their view.

AND if the *publishing* these brief memoirs should produce this desirable effect, and be serviceable to any in their most important, their eternal concerns; [I pray God it may!] I have gained the *grand end* I had in view, and shall be thankful; and even Mrs. Iremonger, with all her humility and low thoughts of herself, will forgive my having thus shewn her to the world; supposing the saints in *heaven* were acquainted, with what we poor mortals are doing here upon *earth*.

I HAVE somewhere met with a few lines in the form of an *epitaph*; it is very *apropos*; and suggests matter of comfort. I'll beg leave to subjoin it, though I know not where to make my acknowledgments for it.

“ Not twice twelve years full told, a
wearied breath

“ I have exchanged for a happy death.

“ Short

“ Short was my life ; the longer is my
rest :

“ God takes them soonest, whom he
loveth best.

“ He that is born to day, and dies to
morrow,

“ Loses some hours of joy, but months
of sorrow.

“ Other diseases often come to grieve
us ;

“ Death strikes but once, and that stroke
doth relieve us.”

God of his infinite mercy grant, that
the stroke of death may be thus friendly
to every one of us ! may we then *rest* from
our *labours*, and *enter* into our master's
joy ! Amen !



F I N I S

S